



## MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH

### First Judicial District

**Mission:** To provide justice through a system that assures equal access for the fair and timely resolution of cases and controversies.

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Judicial District  
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[First Judicial District Public Website](#)

The First Judicial District has 36 judges and more than 250 staff that handle over 115,000 cases annually in the counties of Carver, Dakota, Goodhue, Le Sueur, McLeod, Scott and Sibley.

# The First Edition

A Newsletter about the First Judicial District of the State of Minnesota

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SPRING 2021

## Minnesota Judicial Branch Launches Minnesota Court Records Online

The Minnesota Judicial Branch now provides online access to many Minnesota district (trial) court public documents. [Minnesota Court Records Online \(MCRO\)](#) is an application, that once fully implemented, will replace Minnesota Public Access (MPA) Remote as the online platform for public access to state district court documents.

“Public access and transparency is key to ensuring trust and confidence in the courts. Increasing remote online access to public court documents is the next step forward in the Minnesota Judicial Branch’s commitment to create a more universal electronic environment that ensures greater access, convenience, and transparency in judicial proceedings,” said Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea.

MCRO provides the public with the ability to search for and retrieve appropriate public court documents without having to go to a courthouse or the State Law Library. The new application features a *modern design, and increased usability and reliability over MPA Remote.*

The Minnesota Judicial Branch is rolling out MCRO in three phases. During this first phase, appropriate public documents filed in a case are accessible when searching only with the case number. Future phases of MCRO will include access to Registers of Actions, the ability to search for cases using party and attorney names, and the use of advanced search features that includes calendar and judgment searches. MPA Remote, the current online platform, will remain available until MCRO is fully implemented.

As MCRO is being rolled out in phases, and not all

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functionality will be available until its full implementation in 2022, the fee for documents accessed via MCRO will not be implemented until court customers have complete access to the system. The statutory fee for purchasing copies of documents at courthouses and the State Law Library remains in effect.

"Public access to court records and documents is a complex issue. The increased use of the Internet to access court documents required an extensive and deliberative process to ensure the courts were balancing privacy with public access to appropriate court documents available online," said State Court Administrator Jeff

Shorba.

The [Rules of Public Access to the Records of the Minnesota Judicial Branch](#) determine which case types and documents in those case types are public information, as well as whether that information can be accessed and retrieved remotely.

## **Users can now access and download the following types of public documents through MCRO:**

### **Documents Filed on or after July 1, 2015:**

- All public documents in all Major and Minor Criminal case types.
- All public documents in all Major and Minor Civil case types.
- All public documents in all public Formal Probate, Other Probate, Guardianship and Conservatorship, and Trust case types.
- Public orders, appellate opinions, and notices prepared by the court in public Family case types and post-adjudication paternity proceedings.

### **Additional Documents:**

- Judgments, orders, appellate opinions, and court-generated notices to parties filed from July 1, 2005, to June 30, 2015, in case types that were publicly and remotely accessible at the time of filing.
- Access to documents in MCRO filed prior to July 1, 2015, is very limited. It depends on when the document was imaged, and if the case type was publicly and remotely accessible at the time of filing.

## **Not Accessible through MCRO:**

- Registers of Actions and the ability to search for cases using party names. These will be accessible during Phase 2 of the MCRO rollout, currently anticipated for later in 2021.
- The use of advanced search features, including calendar and judgment searches. These will be accessible during Phase 3 of the MCRO rollout, currently anticipated for 2022.
- Public documents in public Civil Commitment, Domestic Abuse, Harassment, Delinquency Felony, and Child in Need of Protection or Services (CHIPs) cases.
- Search warrants.

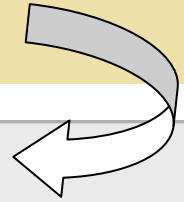


## In-Person Criminal Jury Trials Resume, Limited Access to Court Facilities Continues

In-Person criminal jury trials for all case types have resumed in all state district courts, but limited access to court

facilities remains in place until June 14, 2021, under a new [statewide order](#) issued by the Minnesota Supreme Court

Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea.



Below is a summary of the order; for full details, see the [order](#).

- **Criminal Jury Trials:** In-Person criminal jury trials in all case types may take place, in accordance with the [Minnesota Judicial Branch COVID-19 Preparedness Plan](#) and approved local jury trial plans.
- **Civil Jury Trials:** No in-person civil jury trials will commence before June 14, 2021, unless an exception is granted by the chief judge after consultation with the Chief Justice.
- **Hearings:** All hearings will be [conducted remotely](#) to the extent possible; exceptions may include sentencing hearings in criminal cases where there is presumptive commitment to the Department of Corrections, and contested hearings when evidence is submitted in Major Criminal cases, Child Protection (CHIPS and Permanency) cases, Juvenile Delinquency cases, and omnibus hearings in Major Criminal cases, among other limited circumstance.
- **Appellate Courts:** Proceedings in appeals pending before the Minnesota Supreme Court of Appeals and the Minnesota Supreme Court will continue as scheduled by those courts.
- **Case Filings:** All courts will continue to accept case filings.
- **Public Access:** At least one public service counter must be open in each county, and for the appellate courts, during normal business hours, excluding court holidays. Access to court facilities is subject to conditions posed by county officials. Services may be provided remotely, by appointment, or in-person. [Contact the county court](#) for more information.
- **Media Access:** For updates on county court operations and access to public access terminals (courthouse terminals), contact the Court Information Office.
- [Self-help center](#) services are available by appointment, remotely, or by telephone.
- The [Minnesota State Law Library](#) is open by appointment only.



## Governor Walz Appoints Charles Webber to Fill First Judicial District Vacancy



Charles Webber

On April 6, 2021, Governor Tim Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan announced the appointment of Charles Webber as District Court Judge in Minnesota's First Judicial District. Mr. Webber will be replacing the Honorable Rex D. Stacey and will be chambered in Shakopee in Scott County.

"I am honored to appoint Mr. Webber to the First Judicial District," said Governor Walz.

"Mr. Webber is a proven leader, having spent over 25 years as a trial and appellate lawyer across the country. His good nature and wealth of legal experience will serve him well in this new role."

"Mr. Webber is a strong addition to the Scott County bench," said Lieutenant Governor Flanagan. "With a commitment to justice and service to his community, he will bring an important perspective to the bench."

Minnesota's First Judicial District consists of Carver, Dakota, Goodhue, Le Sueur, McLeod, Scott, and Sibley Counties.

### **About Charles Webber**

Mr. Webber is a partner at Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP. He is a trial and appellate specialist and has represented clients in a wide range of litigation in state and federal courts and in arbitrations. Mr. Webber is a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, the International Society of

Barristers, and the International Academy of Trial Lawyers, and he is a member of American Board of Trial Advocates. His community involvement includes serving as a member and immediate past chair of the board of St. Stephen's Human Services in Minneapolis, a worship-team leader and lay reader at St. James Lutheran Church in Burnsville, and the leader of his firm's Pro Bono Conciliation Court Clinic. Mr. Webber is a past and current member of numerous bar associations.

Mr. Webber earned his B.A., *summa cum laude*, from the University of Minnesota, and J.D. with honors from The University of Chicago Law School.

For more information about the judicial selection process, please visit: <https://mn.gov/governor/administration/judicialappointments/>



## Minnesota Judicial Branch Expands Payment Options for Court-Ordered Fines and Fees

The Minnesota Judicial Branch is making it easier and more convenient for more people to make payments on their court-ordered fines and fees in criminal cases.

Individuals who have a court-ordered fine or fee in a criminal case charged by complaint and are on a payment plan can now make a payment through the Court Payment Center's phone line, or online at the Judicial Branch's [Pay Fines](#) webpage. Prior to this expanded payment option, only individuals charged by citation could make payments online

or by phone.

"As more consumers trend to pay their bills online, the Minnesota Judicial Branch is expanding our digital payment options to provide people who have court-ordered fines and fees with a more efficient way to conduct their business with the courts," said State Court Administrator Jeff Shorba.

In addition to the online and phone payment options, individuals may continue to make payments on their court-ordered fines or fees through the US

Mail or in person at a courthouse.

This expanded payment option is the first in a series of planned enhancements to the Judicial Branch's payment system for court-ordered fines and fees. Other enhancements in development include extending phone and online payment options to individuals who are not on a payment plan, and the ability for individuals to pay a court-ordered fine or fee in any amount up to the full amount due.

## New Pro Bono Campaign Launches

**Lawyers Step Up for Minnesota to help address increased caseload caused by pandemic**

The Minnesota Judicial Branch is partnering with the Minnesota State Bar Association and Civil Legal Aid in a new pro bono campaign to respond to increasing critical legal needs caused by the pandemic.

Lawyers Step Up for Minnesota is a one-year campaign to encourage lawyers to volunteer



their legal skills to help low income Minnesotans.

A new website – [www.LawyersStepUpMN.org](http://www.LawyersStepUpMN.org) – makes it easier than ever for lawyers to express their interest and be matched with

a pro bono program to help Minnesotans in need of legal representation in the areas most impacted by the pandemic – housing,

family, and consumer law.

"The bench and bar have long been partners in encouraging lawyers to volunteer their legal skills. Lawyers Step Up for Minnesota is another example of this great tradition of service to those who might not otherwise have legal representation when they most need it," said Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea.

"The need for lawyers to step up during this

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*New Pro Bono Campaign Launches  
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unprecedented time is essential. The representation they provide through pro bono service improves outcomes for those they represent and our justice system as a whole. When parties understand the legal process, and have an advocate by their side, we all benefit.”

Lawyers who volunteer with family, housing,

and consumer law with civil legal aid programs during the year ahead, either through Lawyers Step Up for Minnesota or their existing service, will be recognized at a virtual event in 2022.

For more information, visit [www.LawyersStepUpMN.org](http://www.LawyersStepUpMN.org) and see this [handout](#).

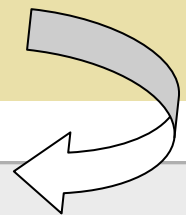


## Meeting the Growing Demand for Parent Attorneys in Juvenile Protection Matters

To respond to the growing demand for high-quality legal representation for parents, guardians and legal custodians in juvenile protection matters, the

Minnesota Judicial Branch through its Children’s Justice Initiative (CJI) Program has revised the qualification and training requirements for parent attorneys and

secured a more flexible and accessible online training provider.



The following changes were effective on February 1, 2021:

- **Experience Qualification:** Attorneys applying to be listed on the roster of qualified CHIPS parent attorneys based on experience must have two years of experience, but the requirement to have handled a certain number of cases during that timeframe has been removed.
- **Supervision Qualification:** Attorneys applying to be listed on the roster of qualified CHIPS parent attorneys based on supervision are no longer required to have a supervising attorney listed on the CHIPS Parent Attorney Roster (PAR). Supervising attorneys can either be on the roster or eligible to be on the roster to serve in that capacity.

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*Meeting the Growing Demand for Parent Attorneys in Juvenile Protection Matters  
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- **Training Qualification:** Attorneys applying to be listed on the roster of qualified CHIPS parent attorneys based on training need to complete a core skills training course, now defined in terms of content areas rather than the previous 18 hours requirement. The revised core skills training may vary in terms of completion time, but will likely result in a total of approximately 9.5 hours of core skills training.
- **Continuing Education:** Parent attorneys no longer have the additional requirement to annually report three continuing legal education credits related to juvenile protection matters to remain on the PAR. Qualified attorneys will remain on the roster as long as they satisfy the requirements all attorneys have to retain their law license.

Qualified parent attorneys who are already listed on the PAR as of February 1, 2021 do not need to take

any additional action to remain on the PAR, and they will no longer need to annually submit proof of completion of three hours of continuing education courses. Attorneys not on the PAR as of February 1, 2021, will need to meet one



of the above revised qualifications before being added to the roster.

The Minnesota Judicial Branch also announced a new training provider to help ensure greater access and flexibility to core skills and ongoing training. Starting February 1, 2021, Mitchell Hamline's [Institute to Transform Child Protection \(ITCP\)](#) will

provide high-quality, relevant, and accessible online core skills training to attorneys who represent parents, guardians, and legal custodians in juvenile protection matters the year. The core skills training has been approved by the State Court Administrator and meets all requirements of existing policy and law.

See [Fast Facts - Changes to Requirements for Qualified Parent Attorneys](#) for additional information.

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